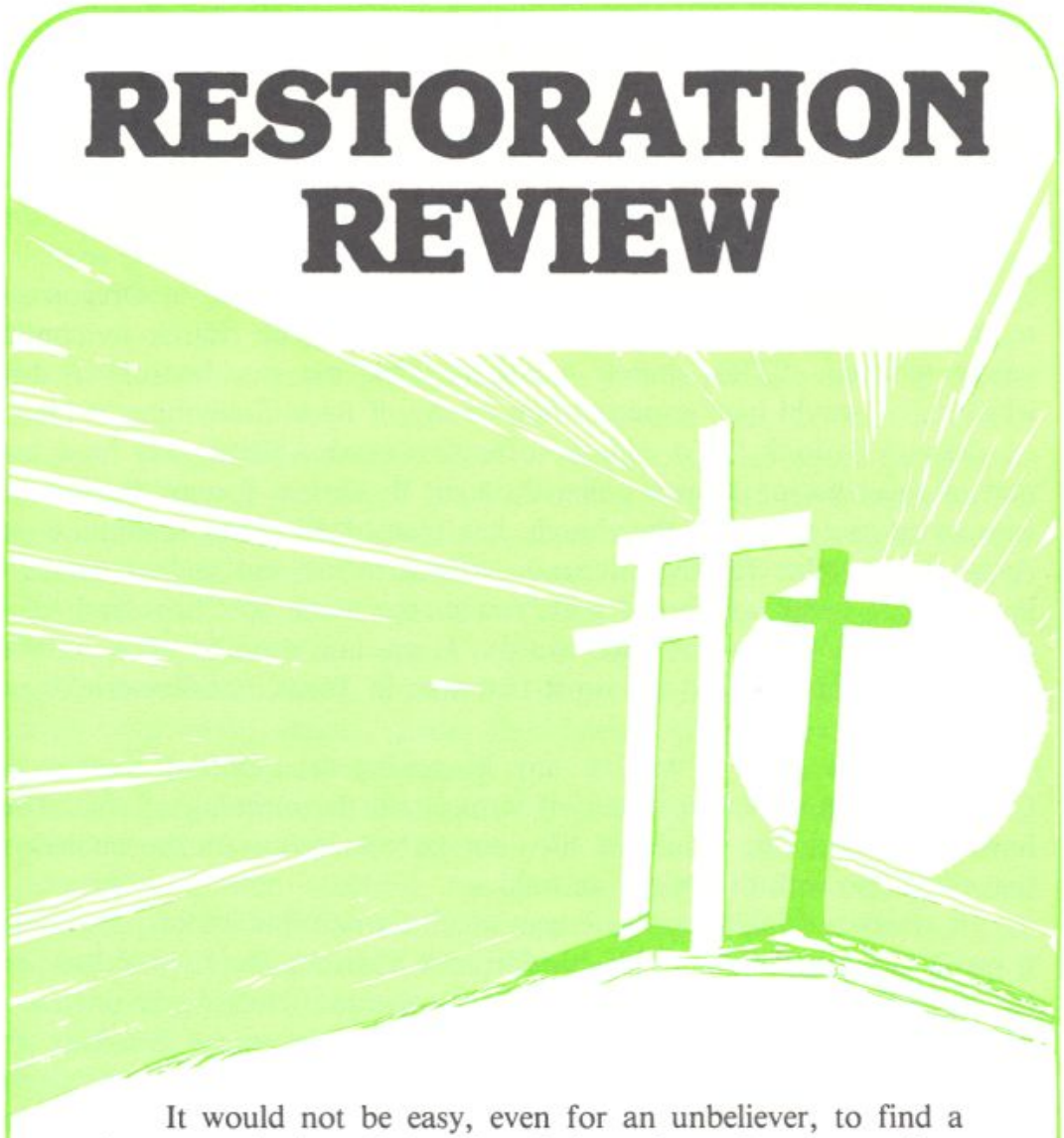
RESTORATION REVIEW



It would not be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life. — *John Stuart Mill*

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The Doe of the Dawn: A Christian World View …

VIRTUES AND VICES

I was amused more than shocked when a brother out in Oregon said to me recently, as we waited in an anteroom of the church to conduct public worship, "This church wants to kick me out because I drink whiskey." I would have expected him to say, if he said anything at all," … because I drink." To add the offensive word *whiskey* may have been part of the rebellion he was going through. Be that as it may, the brother, who serves as an elder in the church, is a man of disarming spiritual depth. As we sat together for the Supper he turned to me and said as he shared the loaf: "I break this bread with you in the name of Christ and to the glory of God," or some such words. I am not used to such intimacy during the Supper. We don't do it that way in Texas, whiskey-drinking or no.

This is as good a way as any in getting at a crucial area in any Christian world view, the nature of virtue and the meaning of vice. These have to do with the whole of life, not only in terms of the choices we make but also with the values we hold.

Is whiskey-drinking a virtue or a vice? Carrie Nations was certain that it was a vice, but W. C. Fields considered it a virtue. The right answer calls for a definition of terms. If the biblical dictum "Nothing is unclean in itself" (Ro. 14:14) applies in this case, then we might conclude that whiskey-drinking is neutral and neither a vice nor a virtue. It would depend on the use made of it. It has for generations been a treatment for various respiratory illnesses. If at that medicinal point whiskey-drinking were conceded to be a virtue, it would be difficult to find agreement as to what point along the way it becomes a vice, except that all would agree that at the point of drunkenness it is indeed a vice.

But even in the case of drunkenness is it the whiskey that is the vice? Or is the "something wrong" inside the person? If we put food-eating in the place of whiskey-drinking, we would all still agree that at a certain point we have a vice, gluttony, a sin that does not generally receive as much attention as drunkenness, except in the Bible (Pro. 23:21). In both of these examples, drunkenness as well as gluttony, the wrong appears to be *within* the person, while food and intoxicating spirits are in themselves neutral and neither moral nor immoral. Foods and spirits do not have to be exact parallels in being potentially beneficial for this to be true. We are again forced to look at the nature and meaning of vice and virtue.

Jesus speaks to this issue in one of the most remarkable things he ever taught: “There is nothing outside a man which by going into him call defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him” (Mk. 7:15). If this blows your mind, you can appreciate what it did to those Jews who had been taught from childhood that defilement comes from what is touched, handled, eaten or drunk. So they asked Jesus what he meant. “Do you not see,” he told them, “that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile him, since it enters his stomach, and so passes on.” At this point Mark does some interpreting: “Thus he declared all foods clean.” But Jesus goes on: “What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man.”

If our Lord had never taught anything but this, he would have been a revolutionary for his time, for this view of defilement ran counter to what his church had been teaching for generations. While the scribes and Pharisees insisted that the touch of an “unclean” dish or to eat with unwashed hands brought defilement, Jesus taught that “these evil things” are rooted deep inside man himself. The sins he names, some of which are close to us all — coveting, deceit, envy, slander, pride— pierce our very souls. And it is staggering to realize that these come from the heart of man, that they are *inward* more than outward. These are the real vices according to Jesus. And to our shame they can be called the “church sins.”

We can see how gluttony or drunkenness might be included in such a list since they too emanate from within man, being sins of the passions, but how about whiskey-drinking? Lest we forget that Jesus himself was accused of being both a drunkard and a glutton (Mt. 11:19) since he “came eating and drinking.” Jesus *did* drink, though it was not likely whiskey, a fact that disturbs those who, like the scribes and Pharisees, suppose that the vices are those things that go *into* man rather than the things that come *out.* And in being overly-righteous about the things that go *in* we are neglectful of the things (our own sins) that come *out.*

As for me I’ll take the winebibber (like Jesus?) who has the love of God in his heart over the teetotaler who spends more time examining others than he does himself. Being a teetotaler myself (except maybe wine at weddings!) I am tempted to plead for both abstinence and a nonjudgmental love. Even moderate drinking in our culture is dangerous since we are largely an out-of-control people, even when it is morally defensible.

Moreover, those who lead the church are to be exemplary. To those who want our Oregon brother to quit his whiskey I urge that they love him out of the habit and not try to condemn him out of it. The best way to change others is by changing ourselves. Our love for each other *must* be unconditional. When we love him whether he drinks whiskey or not, and I mean really love him with *no strings attached*, then he will give up his whiskey. One thing is sure, if love won't do it nothing will do it. Just remember that most of us in our churches are crying out, "Please love me just as you find me!," and they are saying this in different ways. Sometimes by drinking, by drinking *whiskey!* And the more brazen they are and the more intimidating they are, the more pitiful is that cry, *Please love me unconditionally.* And they are right, for a love that issues demands is not really love. We change others only by changing ourselves. The rule is absolute.

But I have not yet defined virtue and vice, even though that great lesson from Jesus brought us to it. Motives and intentions have more to do with virtue and vice than actions. Disposition is the key. When one is kindly and generously disposed, when his intention is to be a blessing, he is virtuous, even if his actions do not reveal such disposition. Misunderstanding or misrepresentation may obscure the magnanimity of his heart. If he has the right inner disposition he is virtuous. He is disposed to be patient, generous, kind, and thoughtful, and his actions are in this direction, even if he is sometimes awkward and stumbling in his efforts.

A vice is the opposite: a disposition toward greed and selfishness, along with all those sins named by Jesus. And again the actions may sometimes be deceiving, for a person may *appear* to be virtuous even when these vices lurk in his heart. A spy appears to be the very essence of virtue, but deceit is his business.

Virtue goes beyond "what is right," whether legal or moral. If I drive within the speed limit *even if I knew I would not be caught for speeding*, I am virtuous. It is the motive or the disposition of the heart that makes for virtue. Just as it would be a vice for me to drive within the limit so as to annoy the driver behind me. My speedometer might be right but my heart would not be!

The chief vice of all is probably deceit, including self-deceit. It is sin enough when we deceive others, but the harm done is compounded when we deceive ourselves. And yet we all seem adept at deluding ourselves. We profess to trust in God's providence, but worry is a favorite pastime. We say we believe in "turning the other cheek," however we interpret it, and yet we are often as bent on "getting even" as unbelievers. We talk about the brotherhood of man, but we usually associate only with those in our own income group

and with those as "good" as we. Because of self-deceit we are seldom bothered by such inconsistencies. And Jesus warned that deceit comes from within us and *corrupts* us. It is only when we are badly deceived that there can be that great gulf between what we profess to believe and what we practice.

This gets at the nature of vice. All vices emanate from a heart that does not really want the truth, whether it be the truth about God or about self. It is a rare person that really wants to know the truth about himself. Man doesn't want righteousness; he only wants to profess it, sometimes. When our Lord offered a blessing to those who hunger and thirst after goodness, he defined virtue. To really *want* magnanimity of heart is the beginning of virtue. Such vices as envy and pride stem from a heart that has the most devastating sickness of all, *the malady of not wanting virtue.*

When Jesus assures us that the real sins come from the heart of man, he is doing more than listing vices. He is telling us that man is corrupt and that he stands in need of the redemptive grace of God. The only answer for the world and its vices is the lovingkindness of God. GRACE! When we see the abundant outpouring of heaven's grace we will see the degradation of our vices. When one theologian was asked to name the surest sign of the regenerated person, he named *self-loathing.* It is only when one loathes the selfish pride that rules his heart that he can cry out, *God, be merciful to me a sinner!* That is virtue.

He can then feel good about himself, not that he is all that "good," but that he stands right with God. He has been washed in the bath of regeneration and made clean by God's mercy. He will resolve all such questions as whiskey-drinking, sooner or later, and to the glory of God, now that his heart is right. Vices gradually give way to the fruit of the Holy Spirit. That is what it means to be born from above. And that is the meaning of virtue. — *the Editor*

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THE (FREE) GIFT RECEIVED

Sin pays its wage — death; but God's free gift is eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord. —Rom. 6:23

A gift to be a gift is free, and it would be adequate for the above verse to say simply: *God's gift* is *eternal life.* But this version, the *Good News for Modern Man*, along with others, renders that charming Greek word *charisma* as "free gift." Nearly all versions,

including the *King James,* adds the *free* in Rom. 5:15-16. *Charisma* in these contexts seems to say more than simply *gift,* so most of the translations seek to capture the force of the language with *free gift.*

Proud man with his propensity for independence tends to eschew anything free. He wants to pay his own way. He does not want to be obligated. Even as a child he insisted, as does my three-year-old granddaughter, "I can do it myself," and this penchant for self-sufficiency affects his religion. He is persuaded that he lives in a world where "There are no free lunches," and so he is slow to accept the idea of a free gift, *unconditionally* free, with no strings attached. He just can't accept it, not even in religion. He has to do *something,* he figures, but apparently the apostle means just what he says. God's grace is free, a free gift.

I recall a family Christmas party at which my six brothers and one sister gathered to exchange gifts for our children. The child of one of my brothers received a gift that was not anticipated. He whispered to his wife, "Is that covered?" He could not bear a circumstance in which he (or his child) received without giving something in return. We prefer to stay "one up" on those who would be gracious to us. We feel obligated to anyone who has us as guests for dinner. We must now have them! We recoil at the idea of a sure-enough, no-strings-attached free gift. It invades the taproot of our psyche, our selfish pride.

The Japanese, who may be the proudest people in the world, make a science out of being "one up" on you. While they will graciously accept your overtures, when the contacts are all over it is certain that they will have out-gifted you, even if it means handing you a gift as you enplane at the airport. It is not that they are not truly a gracious people, but that they make sure they are "covered." It is excusably human.

But does it not miss the point of a religion based on grace? It is the principle of grace as a free gift that seldom finds a home in the heart of man. Even those who profess to accept the gift can hardly receive it as truly free and unconditional. The Scriptures indeed call it a free gift, and in our heads we accept that, but it has difficulty invading our hearts. A free gift! I am suspicious that most Christians are like myself: *it* is *almost too much for us to comprehend.* Even God does not hand out free lunches. We have to do something: some work, pray, be baptized, give money, attend church, *something!* It can't really be *that* free, we reason in our self-sufficient pride.

The spirit of the free gift, unconditional grace and love, hardly pervades the ongoing of life of most of us. And yet this is the only way any of us want to be loved. I often tell Ouida that my love for her is not on a contract basis; it is not a two-way agreement. I love her unconditionally, no strings attached. If she ends up in a wheelchair, no longer capable of the usual responses, I will love her just the same. She doesn't have to stay beautiful, young, thin, sexy, rich, alert, or anything else, for me to love her. I have chosen her to love *forever.* There is nothing she can do to change that. Conditional love is not only not true love but it begets fear and insecurity. If we always have to "measure up" in order to be loved, we will always feel both unloved and unworthy.

It is breathtaking to realize that that is the way God loves us, *unconditionally.* I do not have to be good enough, obedient enough, intelligent enough, sacrificial enough, prayerful enough, studious enough. True, he is a covenant-making God and we are part of that covenant or agreement,

but his love does not depend on our loyalty to that covenant. Nothing can separate us from his love, not even our own waywardness. Jesus teaches us that God loves like the father loved his prodigal son, especially when he was in the pig pen. When the son returned home there were no demands meted out. The father loved him and accepted him *as is,* no strings attached. It was indeed a free lunch, yea, it was a free banquet!

God's free gift of his grace! Doesn't it blow your mind when you ponder the implications? It means, it *has* to mean, that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, that we can do to merit it or deserve it or be worthy of it. We cannot be like the Pharisee that "considered himself righteous" because of what he did and "counted all others for naught." He thanked God that he was not like others! We can only be like the humble publican who stood back from the altar, *unworthy,* who cried to God as he beat his breast, *Be merciful to me a sinner!*

This is the love we are to show to our children. If we love them only as they measure up to our expectations it is not love at all. A child is made anxious when he has to perform at a certain level, whether on the playing field or in the classroom, to gain his parents' acceptance.

And our love for each other as Christians must be unconditional. Sectarianism is cruel in that it demands that we love only those who are true to the party. If those in my congregation love me only as I "line up" and believe and act precisely as they do, I have

no reason to feel secure in their love. If they love me with the love of the free gift, they will love me when I am wrong. It is an inadequate religion when one has to be "right" to be loved.

I recently visited one of our ministers who is now serving another denomination. I sensed that he supposed that he did not count with me as much since he had "left us," so I assured him in no uncertain terms that my devotion to him was not based upon party loyalty but upon our common bond in Jesus Christ. "You are my brother in Christ and I love you (period)," I told him, "and that isn't affected by moving from one denomination to another, for we can serve Christ wherever we are." In fact that may be where more of us should be, out there proclaiming the good news to those who need it most, assuming that "they" need it more than "we".

And *that* is the good news, that God's grace manifest in Christ is a free gift. Thank God for that! If it depended on my goodness or my righteousness or my works, it would be bad news instead of good, for there is no way for me to cut it. I am not good enough to deserve it, strong enough to demand it, rich enough to buy it, nor can I work hard enough to merit it.

Titus 3:3-6 spells out this truth poignantly. Verse 3 presents the *before* side of the picture: "We ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by men and hating one another." Here we have man's perversion and degradation, hopelessly estranged from God. Then comes the great *But* of verse 4: "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us." God acted in our behalf, as unworthy and undeserving as we were, because he is good and loving. He saved us by his grace, only by his grace.

Verse 5 makes it clear that it was *not* because of "deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit." Even a *righteous* act on our part, if such there is, such as penance or baptism, is of no avail. It is only "in virtue of his own mercy" that we are delivered from the *before* life. That he would refer to "the washing of regeneration," which almost certainly refers to water baptism, and "renewal of the Holy Spirit" in this context shows that these are acts of grace which we receive, not acts that we perform. We do not *do* baptism as a work on our part. It is rather something done to us. We *receive* baptism, and in receiving this act of grace we receive the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.

Whatever we say about baptism or a "plan of salvation" we must place it within the context of a free gift from God. We cannot *do* anything to be saved, not if it is a free gift. *Of course* we must accept the gift, but even our response in repentance and baptism is motivated by God's philanthropy, "which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior," to refer once more to Titus 3. That passage goes on to read: *so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.* It is clear that we are justified by what God has done for us, not by what we have done. We are not saved by obeying commandments; we obey commandments because we are saved. We do no works to be saved; we work because we are saved.

Our response to the Father's grace is to be overwhelming gratitude. That gratitude, based upon the goodness and kindness of God, leads us to faith, repentance and baptism. These responses are his work within us (Philip. 2:13), not any righteousness that we do ourselves (Philip. 3:9). Faith and baptism then are part of the free gift. I cannot even believe on my own, unless it be a kind of intellectual assent. The faith that saves is the free gift of God, motivated by the good news of Jesus Christ. It is only when we see the grand truth of the free gift that we begin to perceive the meaning of the grace of God. —*the Editor*

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IS HE "MY PERSONAL SAVIOR" OR "OUR SAVIOR"?

When one studies the Scriptures with a view of ascertaining how Jesus of Nazareth is referred to as Savior, a pattern soon emerges. But first some of the references as they are given in the RSV:

"To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:11).

"They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world"'(Jn. 4:42).

"God exalted him at his right hand as leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).

"For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior" (Eph. 5:23).

"But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philip. 3:20).

". . . the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:10).

". . . the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world" (1 Jn. 4:15).

The pattern is that Jesus Christ is always the Savior *in community,* whether of the church or Body itself or of the entire world. Not once is he the "personal Savior" and not even "my Savior," though once Mary refers to God as "God my Savior" (Lk. 1:47). While the Father is frequently referred to as Savior, the usual description is "God our Savior," as in Tit. 3:4 and Jude 25.

Of the approximately thirty references in the NT to *Savior,* whether of God or Christ, they are all (except the single exception of Mary) in community. Christ is our Savior, or the church's Savior, or the Savior of the world. Never is anyone implored to accept Christ as "your personal Savior," and not once does even Paul (and surely Paul would if anyone would) ever refer to Jesus as "my Savior." It is always "the Savior" or "our Savior." Even when Savior is implied but the term not used the sense of community is present, as in Eph. 1:7: "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us."

The Bible is more of a "our" book than a "my" book, as is evident in the way Jesus taught his disciples to pray: "Our Father who art in heaven. . ." And so when the angels announced the birth of the One who would make the difference, they proclaimed that good news of great joy had come to all the people in that "a Savior" had been born. And when the Baptist announced his entrance upon the scene he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

If Jesus is the Savior of the Body, the church, then of course he is the Savior of each one in that Body, and so he is the *personal* Savior of each one of us. While I do not really object to evangelists urging sinners to accept Jesus Christ as "your personal Savior," I am persuaded that we do better to follow the emphasis of Scripture. Like the apostles, we should proclaim Christ as the Savior of the world, and we are all to look to him as "our Savior." There is not much "I" and "my" religion in the Scriptures. While our Christian

faith is of course personal, we are persons within a community of believers. We look to Jesus as "our Savior" brothers and sisters together—just as we look to God as "our Father."

God has not called us to be loners or hermits. Even when folk appear to be walking together, such as on a busy city street, they are often walking alone. Together but separate! It describes many congregations of all denominations. Each one sits there, adamantly autonomous in his "personal religion" and often unaware of any call of God to community. Those who will not go so far as to practice their "personal religion" on the golf course on Sunday morning may be as individualized while sitting with others on a pew. We must guard against a faith that has become entirely too private. One of the great truths of Scripture is that "we are members one of another." Being a *member* has no real biblical basis except in terms of the Body "joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied" (Eph. 4:16). What a blessing it is to be called to be part of a family where life is shared with others of like precious faith. Just as our prayers are not personal and the Supper is not personal, so the Savior is not personal. He is *our* Savior!

We should resist the temptation to pray privately when we lead the church in prayer. The pronoun should be *our* and not *I* or *me* or *mine.* The way some lead in prayer one would suppose that they were completely oblivious to Body life. We are to assemble as the Body of Christ, break bread as the Body (always discerning the Body as 1 Cor. 11:29 urges), study the Scriptures together as the Body, and praise the Lord as the Body. After writing "If one member suffers, all the members rejoice with it," the apostle penned one of the great lines of Scripture: *Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it"* (1 Cor. 12:27).

Just as some believers act as if they are called to be hermits and loners, some congregations are that way, immersed as they are in "congregational autonomy." While in our tradition we value autonomy as if it came right out of the Bible, it is almost certainly a distortion of the biblical ideal for the church. This would certainly be true of *radical* congregationalism where all forms of cooperatives and agencies are eschewed and where a congregation does its own thing without any awareness of other churches. In the light of Scripture we must conclude that the Church of Christ on earth is *more* than the total number of congregations. There should be something special about what they can do together, and there should be a vigorous awareness of the church in its totality. If the Bible be our guide, there is no such thing as "congregational autonomy." We are not called to be separatists and isolationists, whether in reference to our place in a congregation or that congregation's place in the church at large.

As our Savior, Jesus is both our deliverer and preserver. He delivered us from our slavery to all manner of passions by washing us in the bath of regeneration. And through the renewing power of the Holy Spirit he keeps us or preserves us in the faith. That is what it means to have a Savior.

I like the way Peter puts it when he writes "to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours," and goes on to tell how: by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:1). No one can improve on that, not even the radio and TV evangelists. —*the Editor*

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The Amsterdam Convention (2) . . .

LEARNING AT HOME AND ABROAD

By W. Carl Ketcherside

Before we ever left home to go to Amsterdam we were furnished a list of workshops which would be available to us. Each participant was to select seven. When we arrived we received a sheet showing our selections and the locations of each. There were about 110 in all but several of them required more than one room and several teachers. The instructors were to be experts in their various fields. All of the workshops given in English were translated simultaneously into Portuguese, French, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, German, Spanish and Arabic, making ten languages in which each session of special interest was given.

The translators, who were very adept, occupied booths at the top of the seats in the rear of the auditorium. Each listener was furnished earphones connected to a little black container which he clamped on his coat. By turning a little dial he could easily arrive at the language he understood and could follow right along with the speaker. When I listened to the workshop in "Evangelistic Preaching Among Displaced Persons" I could easily understand the Russian, Yugoslavian, Czech and East German speakers. One of the interesting things to me was to meet men and women who could converse in as many as seven different tongues. There were many who spoke three languages fluently.

There was hardly a theme I could think of which was not discussed. The workshops covered everything from the use of sophisticated media to the evangelist's study life, and his relationship to resistant people and to difficult areas. It was a hard task to select the seven that you wanted to participate in. The one on Buddhism was taught by Tissa Weerasingha, the one on Hindu by Anand Chaudhari of Rajasthan Bible Institute, the one on Jews by Susan Perlman, of Jews for Jesus; the one on Muslims by Dr. Akbar Abdul-Hagg. Even the names sounded as if they were made for the themes. I attended the one on Marxism which lasted almost three hours and featured sixteen men —everyone from the Metropolitan of Russian Orthodoxy, and the Patriarch of the Armenian Orthodox Church, to the Baptist leaders in places like Cuba and Yugoslavia. The first two were in direct contrast to the others. They were attired in robes hung with gold chains and other glittering ornaments. During the question period the exiles who were present and no longer afraid, held the feet of the prelates to the fire. It was interesting and informative.

Before I left home I prayed that I might be enlightened in at least two areas. Saint Louis is a university city. Last year I spent time at the International House at Washington University. One day I met a number of young engineering students. All of them were Muslims. I learned they were from Syria, Saudi Arabia and Oman. I felt at a distinct loss in trying to converse with them, although they all seemed anxious to talk. They spoke English rather fluently. I had never read the Koran, and knew little about its origin. I felt at some disadvantage.

Several years ago I was invited to speak at Washington University on a special occasion. The Student Communist League was holding a memorial service for the Chinese leader Mao Tsetung, who had recently died. The Christians on campus decided to take advantage of the opportunity. They posted a number of notices advertising the difference between a dead leader and his little red book and the living Lord and his little black book. I was invited to be the speaker and to answer questions. The meeting hall was decidedly too small and was full for the occasion. At the time I resolved that I would learn more about Marxism, both as a theory and as a way of life.

It seemed to me that the International Convention was an answer to my longings, I would be thrown into the company of former Muslims and Marxists and I could learn what operated to cause them to change and to become Christians. By keeping my eyes and ears open I could learn a lot in a few days. With the increasing wealth of oil-rich nations there was a growing demand for young engineers and architects. I wanted to know why Marxism and the Muslim faith had spread so rapidly over so much of the earth's surface. They constituted foes we had to meet in hand-to-hand combat.

It turned out that my prayers were answered in ways that were beyond me. I had arranged for an aisle seat on the plane as usual. A young man of 35 sat next to me. Before we got off the ground I learned that he was bound for the Convention in Amsterdam. We were hardly under way until he confided in me that he was a college youth worker for Jesus, specializing in the Islamic Religion. He had been born in the Near east. He and his family now lived in Scotland. For several hours he talked and I listened. It was a course in just what I had prayed for and I wasn't even near Amsterdam yet.

To cap the climax one of the first persons I met in Amsterdam was a young man from near the Pakistani border in India. He had been reared in a Muslim home. He had learned about Jesus from a wandering native missionary, a man who held meetings in the open air because every place else was closed to him. He sat under a tree and told the young man about God's love as manifested in Jesus. It struck a responsive chord. The young man had been imprisoned and threatened with mutilation and death because of his faith in our Lord. He told me that six people, including himself, were taking the message to villages and were being heard. He further told me that the other five were also at the convention. He found them and brought them to meet me. We visited several days and talked for hours. We asked questions of one another as though it was our last hope of learning. And all of the time I was regretting I had grown so old before we met. It was refreshing and stimulating.

I thought I learned something else from these men and others with whom I talked and that was that it was far better to learn from the lips of those who had experienced a thing personally than to learn by reading a book. One might gain a knowledge of doctrines and beliefs but these are always lived out in a cultural context. If we can learn about the culture as well as the pattern of belief we have gone a long way toward solving some of the difficulties of a changing way of life. It is not just minds that are altered by the Good News. That is why the convention was so precious to me. I resolved not to waste a minute of it but to contact someone every opportunity. It was easy to do.

The very first workshop I attended was very enlightening. It was titled "How To use Apologetics in a Non-Christian Religious Background." It was conducted by Dr. Ravi Zacharias, Director of the Chair of Evangelism and Contemporary Thought at Alliance Theological Seminary, Nyack, New York. Dr. Zacharias was born in India. He was thoroughly familiar with Hindu and Muslim thought patterns and was an authority on Buddhism. I listened to him for an hour, taking notes as he talked. He then received written

questions from his audience. The burden of his talk was that apologetics could not be used in India as in America. One had to adapt his methods to suit the climate in which he was laboring, but one should never water down the word of the Lord.

I found myself profiting greatly from the seven workshops which I selected and they were invaluable to me. One of them was on inner city evangelism. Oak Hill Chapel had just leased a storefront on a corner in the inner city before I went over. Perhaps it was the lectureship which emboldened eight of us to go on the street taking the gospel and handing out literature to those who came by. We were so thrilled by what we did that we resolved to do it every month. The reception we had gave us courage. The people we talked with were like hungry men and women being handed parcels of food.

HOW WE READ

Robert Meyers

It has been proved repeatedly that a person is less likely to remember a fact that conflicts with his belief system than to remember one that supports it. Two professors once compared five college students who had Communist sympathies with five equally bright anti-Communists. Each student read a violently anti-Communist selection and wrote down all he could remember of it. The procedure was repeated with a selection that was strongly pro-Communist. (Some students read the pro-Communist selection first, to balance the effects of order of reading).

On three successive weeks, the students reread the passages and were immediately tested. During the next five weeks tests were given to measure their degree of “recall.”

The results? The anti-Communist group learned the anti-Communist ideas more rapidly and remembered them longer. The pro-Communists also remembered best the selections they wanted to believe. So it is that people hold on to the facts that fit their basic idea of what is true and reasonable, and are little perturbed by facts that do not fit.

We actually do not “see” information we do not “want” to see. Our prejudices act as a kind of unconscious filter. As a professor teaching university courses in the Bible I am constantly amazed at the things I find in that library. Even though I read certain passages over many times through the years, I read with a certain mental “set,” a kind of pre-conditioned mind. The material I sought, or needed, leapt out at me as if it were in boldface type. Material that was useless to me, or might have caused me to question my belief system, receded and became invisible.

It is necessary that we remember this if we are going to have proper sympathy for people who do not "see" what seems to us to be right under their noses. ("Plain as the nose on their face," the preachers of my boyhood liked to say). Their physical eyes see, but their minds do not register. They are benefitting from a built-in protective system which lets ,us admit only the useful and previously approved.

Since there is no time or condition of life to which this rule does not apply, all of us must provide our own safeguards against this hazard. And the best safeguard I know is to talk often with, and listen sympathetically to, people who have quite different approaches from our own. The experience of trying to "see" with *their* eyes can be illuminating, indeed, and may save us from being held captive forever by the biases we have already formed.

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I have an old friend who is working on a biography of Elder William Brewster, an early Congregationalist. Not long ago my friend sent a quotation he thought would interest anyone who had grown up, like me, in the Church of Christ.

To set the stage I need to tell you that he had just finished a chapter dealing with the advent of Puritanism in the villages around Scrooby, England. The man who brought that reforming zeal in the mid-1590's was one Richard Clyfton, who had obtained the "living" of a church in Babworth, a little hamlet eight miles south of Scrooby. The following description of Clyfton's zeal will serve to remind heirs of the Restoration movement that nearly three centuries earlier there were people who linked statues, organs and clerical garments as devices of the Devil:

"Not content with words alone, Clyfton proceeded to exemplify his 'forward' beliefs by ridding the church of statues of the saints, carting away the organ, teaching his congregation to 'catch the tune' from a 'singing voice,' and appearing in the pulpit dressed in an ordinary layman in ruff, jerkin, doublet and breeches, rather than in vestments."

"I wonder," my friend wrote, "if good old Alexander knew that?"

I'll bet he did!

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SOLEMNITY is occasionally beautiful and appropriate but far more often an affectation. We are ill at ease, and so we act solemn. Or we want to convince others that what we are about to do is more serious than anything they have yet met, so we act solemn. Sometimes we want to fill our pocketbooks and we think the best way to do it in a given

circumstance is by convincing customers of our absolute and unvarying seriousness, so we act solemn.

When I was in Abilene Christian College, a friend and I used to smile at what we considered the incredible SEE-E-E-E-RIOUSNESS of some of the preacher boys. They never unbent. With solemn faces and black bibles under their arms, and with broom stickily erect postures, they strolled magisterially about the campus. We thought they needed to be twitted, for the sake of their health, and so we gave ourselves joyously to this enterprise. It did not make *us* popular, but (I am happy to report) it did unbend some of *them.*

Ever since I have been wary of eternally solemn folk. They frighten me as lean and hungry Cassius frightened Caesar. I would not have such men about me, for I do not understand them and I invariably provoke them by twitting them at the wrong moment.

This being true, you can understand my delight when I was reminded the other day of that French wit who defined solemnity as "a mysterious carriage of the body to cover defects 'of the mind." He must have been spiritual kin to Mark Twain, who thought that a hearty laugh could explode more nonsense in this world than all the dynamite in all the warehouses.

So laugh, brother, laugh! And especially when you hear solemn nonsense. —*338 Fairway, Wichita, KS 67212*

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IDENTIFYING THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

Those of you who read my account of the story of the Stone-Campbell movement in a 739-page book with that title will observe that I lay part of the blame for our many divisions at the feet of authoritarian preachers and editors. I call them "Editor Bishops," a term applied to them early on in our history. Not all editors were authoritarian, of course, but in our turbulent history we have had more than our share.

Whether in yesteryear or today the authoritarian personality needs to be identified and, if need be, *marked,* to use an overworked biblical term, in an effort to circumvent the mischief he will do both to himself and the church. If our Lord would assure us that we have the poor with us always, he might assure us as well that we have authoritarian leaders with us always. Perhaps he says as much when he warns us to *Beware of men.*

A book by T. W. Adorno, written a generation ago, entitled *The Authoritarian Personality,* helps us to follow Jesus' warning to guard ourselves and the church against a certain type personality. Our Lord's assurance that "By their fruits you shall know them" applies to these manipulative leaders. And a study of their traits will help us to examine ourselves lest we ourselves be guilty. Adorno believes there are clearly defined marks in the authoritarian person, such as:

1. *His relations with others is based on authority rather than love and friendship*. Friendship and acceptance depend on one's loyalty to whatever may be the authority symbol, whether a rigidly defined set of doctrines or a party where the lines are clearly drawn. You are loved only if you are "faithful" to the system and its leadership. Such ones are extremely domineering over those in subordinate positions and those viewed as inferior to themselves. And they show great deference toward those who have authority over them.

2. *He emphasizes conventional behavior and stresses close conformity to group norms*. One who is inclined to ask questions will be uncomfortable around him, for he supposes he has already given all the answers and there is nothing to question. Conformity is demanded, especially in those areas he has come to champion. His group is expected to behave and think a certain way, and deviation from this is not tolerated.

3. *He has an exaggerated sense of his own moral goodness and doctrinal rightness*. Because of this he tends to deny his own immoral impulses and may even project them upon others as a defense mechanism, especially on those outside his group. He lacks self-understanding and is usually undisciplined in his own personal life. He seeks to control others with a rigidity he does not impose upon himself.

4. *He is rigid in his thought processes*. He may be more "logical" than reasonable, and of course he has to be right. He may even glory in the fact that he never changes his mind. He is intolerant of other groups and is critical of them. He is so stereotyped in what he says that one can anticipate "what comes next."

5. *He tends to use others, depersonalizing human relationships*. He may even have masochistic and sadistic tendencies. Others become the means to his own selfish ambitions, not sacred ends in themselves. He is willing to hurt people so long as it helps to uphold what he has canonized as right.

These traits are undergirded with rigidity, inflexibility, and censoriousness. Such a person is reactionary to change and feels personally threatened when change is called for, for like the God of heaven he changes not. And he is usually conceited and has an exaggerated estimate of his own importance. One Editor Bishop, for instance, fell upon the floor crushed when he heard of Alexander Campbell's death, saying, "It is not that he has gone that I am grieved, but that his mantle must fall upon my unworthy shoulders." However "unworthy" he viewed himself, Campbell's mantle did *not* fall upon him. Campbell's mantle fell upon no one, which was probably just as well. Mantles are too often garments of pride that can just as well be left to Elijah and Elisha.

Austerity is his badge, not conciliation. He is more the lawyer than the diplomat. He is strong in logic but weak in sweet reasonableness. While he demands to be listened to, he is not often a good listener. But why should he listen when he has nothing to learn? This is the authoritarian personality, and he is dangerous to have around. His potential for harm may lie in his insecurity. Hardly anyone is as dangerous as a frightened man.

How are we to respond to such ones? The old adage of being forewarned is to be forearmed applies here. Jesus warns us to *Beware!* We will never get lost by following ambitious leaders so long as we remain disciples of Jesus. We follow *him,* not men. Unless they point to Jesus, we are not to go the way they point. We are never to take that first step *away* from our Lord. The best antidote against manipulative men is for us to be a people who cannot be manipulated. We do not let anyone sell us a bill of goods for the simple reason that we do not buy phoney goods. That puts the manipulators out of business quickly.

Another antidote is hearty laughter. While laughing *at* people rather than *with* them is usually impolite, I am persuaded that we need to laugh in the face of some of these phonies. An effective way to handle the pompous, overly-serious super saint, or the brother who is ready to debate at the drop of the hat is not to take him seriously.

But still we are never to give up on such people, realizing that the grace of God triumphs even over authoritarianism. Even when we laugh at their sobriety and ignore their antics, we are to keep on loving them with a love that is evident. —*the Editor*

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BOOK NOTES

We will send you a five-pac of C. S. Lewis' most popular books for only 16.00 postpaid. These are *Miracles, Mere Christianity, The Problem of Pain, The Great Divorce, The Screwtape Letters. If you have* not read Lewis, you should and this is the place to start.

Carl Ketcherside's *The Death of the Custodian*, a study of the covenants, has been reprinted as *That the World May Believe.* It is an ideal little book to pass along to someone who is willing to think and become a freer Christian. We will send you three copies for only 5.00, postpaid.

Jack Cottrell, a professor at Cincinnati Christian Seminary, has authored a new book entitled *What the Bible Says About God the Creator,* which is a highly resourceful volume that discusses the nature of creation as well as the Creator. His chapter on the fear of God will make you want to praise His name. The price is 13.50 in beautiful hardbound edition, postpaid.

In the same series issued by College Press is Carl W. Pruitt's *What the Bible Says About God's Answers to Personal Problems*, which is rich in bibliography. The problems dealt with both biblically and pragmatically are death, depression, anxiety, children of broken homes, maturation, two-career marriage, the empty nest, widowhood, discipline in the home, coping with anger. Packed with principles to live by, this book has a lot to offer. 13.50 postpaid.

People like to read history when it is brief and to the point. This makes Harry Boer's *A Short History of the Early Church* one of our best sellers. You can read about Augustine or Ambrose and about the persecutions and the great councils. Much, much more up to 600 A.D. 5.50 postpaid.

We make special effort to get people to read Howard Snyder's provocative volumes: *Liberating the Church,* which is a plea to get us into kingdom business instead of church business; and *The Community of the King,* which is an exciting study of the nature of the church as the kingdom of God. They are 6.95 each, but we highly recommend that you read them both. If you order both, we pay the postage, a total of 13.90.

Our bound volumes are now being read as if they were books, not a bound periodical. These are *Principles of Unity and Fellowship* (1977) at 5.50; *The Ancient Order* (1978) at 5.50; *Blessed Are the Peacemakers* and *With All the Mind* (double volume, 1979-80) at 9.50; and *Jesus Today* (double volume, 1981-82) at 9.50, all prices postpaid.

Our *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An Anecdotal History of Three Churches*, by Leroy Garrett, continues to sell well in its second printing. Many buy it as a gift to someone else after reading it themselves. If you send a check for 21.95 we'll pay the postage. Or you can get a free copy if you'll get up eight subs to this journal, including your own renewal, at 3.00 per name, a total of 24.00

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

Occasionally a congregation that split into two factions long ago (people forget the reasons why!) finally get back together. This happened with a Church of Christ out in our county only recently. They are once again one church. When asked how they managed to effect a union after so many years, they explained that it only took a few good funerals. It is odd, isn't it, how folk can hold both the joy of Christ and grudges against each other in their hearts? Or is this possible? Be that as it may, I doubt if we can count on funerals as a means to a greater unity of the church at large.

In a recent issue of *Firm Foundation*, Buster Dobbs, one of the editors, wrote: "When you think about it, the accusation, 'You think you are right and everyone else is wrong!', is not easy to answer. How can you answer it? What is one expected to say? Shall we answer, 'Oh, no, no, a thousand times no, I don' think I am right; I think I'm wrong'." This implies that one must accept one extreme or the other. There is a more acceptable option. I can believe that I am right without necessarily concluding that all others are wrong. This is not relativism. It only recognizes that there are vast areas in which Christians can and do differ, and while each of us should be firm in what he believes, he does not have to be judgmental toward those who differ with him.

Princeton Seminary, conducted by the United Presbyterian Church, has a new president, Thomas W. Gillespie, who is a Pepperdine graduate. In an interview he was asked what he believed about homosexuality, legalized abortion, nuclear disarmament and divestment, the latter being a reference to the demand that institutions withdraw all investments in South Africa enterprises because of their practice of apartheid. I was impressed with the forthrightness of his response. "Homosexuality, whatever its etiology may be, is not a part of God's intention for human sexuality, and homosexual behavior is a form of sin," he said. While abortion is the taking of human life, there are circumstances in which human life might be taken responsibly, he observed. He sees nuclear disarmament as necessary, but it cannot be unilateral. Both investment and divestment are part of

Christian stewardship, he insisted, and they are subject to the lordship of Christ. He added that all four issues are critical and complex and that his mind is open to new insights. Always a pastor, the new president has learned to speak his mind and keep it lean. We hope that after a decade as president he will still be able to speak and *say something!*

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READERS' EXCHANGE

I am graduating from Johnson Bible College and will soon be moving to Florida. One of the things I will miss at JBC are the classes of Stan McDaniel. He is an excellent teacher and I have learned much from him. He has introduced many students to you and the *Restoration Review*. *—Steve Merritt, Knoxville, TN.*

I recently came across a card you sent me back in 1976, and if you are still publishing *Restoration Review* I want back on the mailing list. I retired in 1978 and am now stone deaf without a hearing aid, and even with a hearing aid I understand only a few words due to noises. I want to know if there is a hearing aid that overcomes word deafness. If you will mention this in your paper, some of your readers might help me. I live in southern Illinois, a coal mining region. You once visited with brother Sims in Royalton, only ten miles from my home. I still keep in touch with Carl Ketcherside and have many of his books, and I prize the books of the late William Barclay of Scotland, whom you once visited. My folks came from the central part of England, called the Midlands, just north of Birmingham, but in the shire of Staffordshire. Give my kindness regards to Ouida, whom you once referred to as “the cat’s meow.” *—Rowland Ward, 701 S. Victor St., Christopher, IL 62822.*

I’m looking forward to the next hard bound edition of *Restoration Review.* I stopped the monthly issues, but still get out my hardbound volumes and review them on occasion. You may find it curious that a “Pentecostal” would enjoy your magazine, but I am dedicated to the unity of the Body and consider it a joy to have served a branch of His “Restoration” Body. *—Timothy B. Cremeens, First Assembly of God, 47 Old Park Lane Rd., New Milford, Ct. 06776.*

The Lord bless you for thinking of us and taking the time to spend with us. Please greet the brethren for us wherever you go. We love them. *—Bob Cannon, Bethel Church (Assembly of God), Eureka, Ca. 95501 (formerly with Churches of Christ).*

I have read your *The Stone-Campbell Movement* a second time. I am convinced it will withstand its attackers, whose criticisms I regard as nitpicking. —*Charles Turner, Houston, TX.*

The more things change the more they remain the same. Your article "On Being Locked Up Together" (Feb. issue) took me back to Henderson, Tn. and your visit to Freed-Hardeman College. I was a student and we spoke together at that time. I was more interested in whether they would allow you to speak than in what you had to say. I was sure I saw the faint impression of the outline of growth forms along your hairline above the ears! Maybe we can meet again and I can check the growth of those appendages! Send me a copy of *The Stone-Campbell Movement,* which I will present to Mary on our 26th wedding anniversary. —*Wayne Weaver, Laramie, WY.*

(Anyone who can write "The more things change the more they remain the same" while celebrating his 26th wedding anniversary is a confirmed optimist. We will not have to worry about him, even on his visits to his alma mater! But I am not sure that I should have my head examined, for if things do not change they do grow, including horns! —*Ed.*)

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